

IMPACT OF SOCIO-ECONOMIC STATUS ON THE ENROLLMENT OF GIRLS STUDENTS IN PUBLIC SECTOR SCHOOLS OF DISTRICT WEST KARACHI

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ABSTRACT

The study focused factors that influence the enrolment of girls students at secondary schools of district west Karachi. The scope of the study was limited to girls students and their parents. The strategy of research was survey. The study revealed that female students have to face a great deal of problems and various obstacles for instance, poverty, insecurity, attitude of community and parents towards education and so on, as a result many female students are not able to continue further education. Parents and community have a biased approach towards girls' education and parents do not want to spend on their daughters' better education. Furthermore, government needs to take quick and practical steps towards the betterment of female education. An awareness campaign is being run by different means i.e. media, community mobilizers, and different NGOs in order to provide a better understanding of the importance of education with preferred reference of female/girls education. In the light of the findings concrete recommendations were made.

Keywords: Community, parents, enrolment, female students

INTRODUCTION

Immediate attention needs to be paid to the status and enrollment of female students at secondary school level. The research study focused the impact of socioeconomic status on enrollment of female students at secondary school level in the district west Karachi.

Coleman (1966) stated that influence of student background was greater than anything that goes on within schools.

Poverty and unawareness are two of the major factors that influence female education in Pakistan. Despite the fact that Islam provides equal opportunities for men and women in embarking education many Islamic countries failed to introduce a systematic education system for female students.

Al-Quran the last holy book of Allah also confined some principle factors for the pursuit of knowledge. In Islam there is no discrimination of gender in getting knowledge rather Islam put a great emphasis on learning and reflecting.

This our weakness that we are not able to internalize what God has advised. Women are a great gift of God as mothers, daughters, sisters and wives. They have to perform different roles for their families even bread winners. In this connection they need to be equipped with necessary knowledge and skills in order to comprehend their roles effectively. Hence education is the only way that can nurture their skills and abilities according to their specific roles and responsibilities. However, this aspect has been neglected in many societies and Pakistan is one of them.

The international scope of growth of women studies was demonstrated in May 1980 when UNESCO invited a committee of experts to Paris to discuss research and teaching related to women. These experts representing Europe, Africa, Caribbean, North and South America, Middle East and Asia emphasized the contribution of women in the field of education, proposing and emphasizing on award of scholarships to women studies.

After independence all education commissions and policies have emphasized on female education but practically it has not been implemented effectively. Pakistan has very discouraging facts and figures in providing educational opportunities and in relation to this our progress in sustaining a levelheaded standard of female education is equally depressing.

Pakistan is a democratic country with a firm faith in Islamic values of social justice and equality, unfortunately there is a big gap between beliefs and practices and our society is not ready to accept females' right of equality, particularly in education.

The research therefore investigated the factors influence the enrollment and achievement of girl students.

According to the Proposal for National Educational Policy 1978 the special efforts would be made to expand and improve the facilities for the education of the females. About 30,000 teachers will be recruited for primary schools during the next five years to achieve the target and as a result the enrollment of girls at the secondary level would be increased from 400,000 to 650,000. The Higher Education Commission (HEC) set up a committee to undertake a detailed study of alternative approaches to the establishment of women universities.

However, the reality is quite bitter and needs a reasonable consideration in terms of research and evaluation of the factors that have direct impact on the education and enrollment of girl students.

The main aim of the study was to investigate major reasons and factors of low enrollment of girl students in secondary schools of district west Karachi. Furthermore the researcher strived to find out the need for financial assistance of girl students in district west Karachi.

The low enrollment of girl students in district west requires an exceptional response and therefore it caught the researcher's attention to conduct a study. The study revealed that enrollment of girl students in the District West is low due to the following factors:

1. Parents' attitude towards female education
2. Low socioeconomic status
3. Society and culture
4. So called religious leaders
5. Security reasons
6. Lack of support from school and management

LITERATURE REVIEW

Education plays an important and critical role in the holistic development that leads to empowerment. Besides the knowledge and skills acquisitions, education also enhances one's critical thinking skills by which one can analyze and evaluate his/her surroundings in a better way. As a result one sees himself/herself as an important person with developed self esteem and can have better social and financial status in the community. Education, therefore, be made available to all.

According to Memon (2007) Education helps to become better parents and to live a healthier life. It is ahead of qualm that providing education to girls can give way a higher pace of results than any other venture.

There is a high-flying discrepancy in the rates of enrollment of boys, as compared to girls in Pakistan. In this connection figures analyzed by UNESCO indicate the level of attention given to education of girls. The report highlighted 60/84 ratio of enrolment in primary schools and 32/46 in secondary schools which is quite discouraging.

School attendance also reflects the lack of interest of school teachers, management and administration towards the education of girls as regular attendance of girl students was measured at 41% while for male it is 50%.

According to the Population Census of 1998, the overall literacy rate in Pakistan was 45 percent. The number of literate females increased from 0.8 million in 1961 to 11.4 million in 1998. Overall literacy rate in Pakistan is lower as compared to other countries in the region. The cause could be limited number of educational institutions in the country and ease of access to those. The position in rural areas, where the greater part of population is located, is even more severe. The people in those areas evade sending their children to schools, especially girls because schools are in distant areas (Memon, 2007).

Education is everybody's human right. This simple fact is at the core of UNICEF's commitment to women's education. It means that no girl is to be excluded from school irrespective of their country's situation. There is no acceptable excuse for denying the opportunities to develop her fullest potential. Despite decades of attention to the issue, around 121 million children are out of school, and 65 million of them are girls (Mishra, 2005).

However, this is an ironical fact that in Pakistan the realization of the importance of female education is far behind particularly in the rural areas. Almost all governments talk about it and working committees plan different programs but nobody bothers with the effective implementation of the plan.

In 2012, UNESCO stated that Pakistan showed the least progress in the region in educating low-income girls. The poorest girls in Pakistan are twice as likely to be out of school as the poorest girls in India, almost three times as likely as the poorest girls in Nepal and around six times as likely as the poorest girls in Bangladesh. Even when there is the possibility of enrolling in a school, actually doing so can be downright dangerous. In June 2013, militants blew up a bus carrying female university students in Quetta, the capital of Pakistan's southwestern Baluchistan province, and the institution has since been shuttered.

Pakistani women who want to contribute to the economy face other barrier as well, a 2012 World Bank report details the difficulties they face in gaining access to capital due to social constraints needing permission from a male to even qualify for a loan, for example. According to the study, 50% to 70% of microloans given to women in Pakistan may actually be used by their male relatives.

Education is a fundamental human right. The UN Charter and Constitution of Pakistan place equivalent provision of education and progress chances, for both men and women.

Education provides a rationale and objectivity to life but present society, traditional attribution of male and female roles and family boundaries often seize back girls from going to school thus hold back girls to take the best start. Particularly, favoritism for son results unfairness against daughters. Parents do not view education as a human right rather they take it as an option to send their daughters to school or not and therefore regardless of quite a few

efforts of the government of Pakistan and international development organizations, the female literacy rate is distant from the same to literacy rate of males in Pakistan.

Gender disparity is amalgamated by the fact that there are lesser schools for girls, percentage of female teachers and women professionals in education remnants very low. Some abridged progress has been made to increase enrollment and contribution rate but it is a long way to attain equity and equality of educational prospects for both males and females.

In the context of girl's education, female teachers' role is pivotal in making sure girl's enrollment and turnout; and different studies point out that a female teacher also put forth a positive persuasion on the academic performance of all students both boys and girls. Although girls execute better when taught by a female teacher, amusingly, boys also performed better when taught by a female teacher, whether in urban or rural areas.

UNDP report 2010 highlighted the ironical fact that Pakistan was ranked 120 in 146 countries in terms of Gender connected progress, and in terms of gender empowerment it was ranked 92 in 94 countries. Gender disparity could be calculated in many ways. Gross and net enrolment rates and achievement, and drop-out rates are the ways to recognize the gender discrimination in education. Pakistan aims to achieve [Millennium Development Goals](#) and also aims to eradicate gender disparity at all levels of education by the year 2015. In order to get rid of gender disparity at all levels of education there is a need to allocate higher level of resources for women education. Strong gender inequality exists in literacy and educational achievement between rural and urban areas of Pakistan.

Gender inequality is significantly implanted in the society of Pakistan, especially in rural areas. At first women have to be experts in unpaid households whereas men do paid work and become the head of the family. This attitude has resulted in low level of resource investment in girls' education by their families and state.

The low investment reflects a negative impression and social biases for women. As a result cultural restrictions are put on the women where they face problems in moving freely and here comes gender discrimination which creates a negative impression about women as if they do not have the capability to do different jobs that have a good market. Furthermore, gender discrimination limits the opportunities for women to collaborate in accordance with the available resources outside their home.

The government of Pakistan is hypothetical to provide every citizen a right to get education, but in reality its budget allocation towards education does not matched with its objective. The overhead on education as a percentage of [GDP](#) was 1.82% in 2000–2001, while it has been raised to some extent in 2006–2007 to 2.42%, and it is still comparatively lower than most neighboring countries. Economists recommend that the government of Pakistan should address and determine the gender concerns that subsist in the educational sector. They advised that the situation could be better and improved by funding for women's education. People of rural areas should be encouraged and somehow given some inducement in terms of finance in order to send their daughters to schools.

Female education has never grown in Pakistan due to be deficient in interest and proper implementation of programs and policies. Every government develops different programs and policies in order to increase the ratio in the enrollment of female students. However, the policies has never given due importance in this connection lack of monitoring and evaluation caused weak implementation of the policies.

It would be interesting to state the example of Bangladesh that brought marvelous progress in female education. An association called BARCK (Bangladesh Rural Advancement

Committee) started its Non-Formal Primary Education Program (NFPE) which was based on the education of women so that they could achieve higher level of education. Today the number of schools exceeds 34,000, catering over 1.1 million students where 70% of them are girls. This reflects the commitment of the government and non-government organization which is working very well.

In contrast Pakistan is facing difficulties in even designing proper program that could facilitate female education with conducive learning environment. Furthermore, Taliban and other extremists have added much more disappointments on the part of education of female. Once when they completely banned female education in the Swat district, as reported in a newspaper Some 400 schools enrolling 40,000 girls had been shut down. The security implication discourages the parents to send their girls to schools. However, there are people who have courage to face such problems bravely like Malala Yousuf Zai who has become an example for the world.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The data was collected through survey and observation. The methodology was the combination of quantitative and qualitative approach.

The population of this study was all the teachers, students and leading educationists of district West Karachi.

Simple random sampling was adopted. The overall sample size comprised on 50 students, 10 teachers and 10 leading educationists of govt. secondary schools of District West.

Questionnaires were designed in order to collect the data from the selected samples. In addition to this observation diary and interview protocol were also developed for the collection of data.

FINDINGS

The study revealed that female students have great motivation to attend the higher level of education. However, low socio economic status is one of the major hindrances for them in acquiring education as 80% of students agreed that poverty affects the enrollment of female students. 70% of teachers and 80% of educationists supported the argument. 80% of the students have desire for higher education but the financial problems and so called family honor are hurdles in stepping forward. They further expressed that the parents are not motivated for the education of their daughters and this attitude of the parents towards their daughters' education is resulted in the dropout rate of female students. All the students, teachers and educationists expressed that there is no kind of financial support is provided by the schools or any other organization which causes lack of interest from their parents/families. The selected teachers, students and educationists are of the view that there should be some stipend from school in order to reduce financial expenditures of the female students.

In this regard a proper campaign should be run by the school management committee and some NGOs or donors can be found for financial support for female students. There are some entrepreneurs and NGOs who are already supporting some schools by adapting and these can be contacted through proper channel.

80% of teachers and 70% of educationists agreed that security is another major reason of decline of female education. In the present scenario of Karachi parents are reluctant to send their girls for schools. Even female teachers face problems in terms of security. Unfortunately the state failed to control the law and order situation; consequently, snatching and target

killing are common. As a result many businessmen and traders are leaving the country so how can lower middle class rely on government allow their daughters to move freely.

We may expect the government get success in the present operation and identify the real culprits who are diminishing the situation in the biggest city of Pakistan.

CONCLUSION

The researcher finally made conclusion after testing research questions and interpreting responses that. There are many religious, political, social and economical obstacles in the way of female education and therefore female students do not have educational opportunities equal to male students. As a result the enrolment of girl students is decreasing. Furthermore, in the present scenario of Karachi the security measures have not been employed effectively so as to girls can move freely and participate in educational activity.

Socioeconomic status of the parents is one of the major factors that influence enrolment of girl students. Parents do not want to spend on their daughters' education because they do not pay off though many girls are becoming breadwinners for their families yet they are not provided equal opportunities as of their brothers.

RECOMMENDATIONS

On the basis of findings and conclusion, the recommendations are:

1. A reasonable amount of budget may be allocated for improving the situation of girl education
2. SMCs could make effective and proper arrangements for stipend for girl students
3. There is a need to establish more institutions and universities for women
4. A more influential awareness campaign may be run for the parents and other stakeholders of the society
5. Government should take some serious steps towards the security of girls and female teachers in order to reduce dropout rates.

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